for its oats; but an entire farm is seldom, if ever, devoted to one crop.

With few exceptions, then, the chief occupation of the small farmers is the production of cattle. Milk is sold direct to the creameries in areas where they have been established. It comes to occupy the largest part of farm production in such counties as Limerick, but in Clare the creameries are still being introduced. Where there is no creamery, the milk is used for food in the form of butter, or sold as fresh and salted butter in near-by centers, or it is fed to livestock. For the small farmer may keep several dry cattle and calves in addition to his milch cows.

The ideal is to have as much grass as possible, even with those small farmers who do most tillage. A farm is described among them as "the place of [so many] cows." For this reason, hay is the principal crop of the year; in all cases, it is an important fodder. Often it is the only winter fodder. The dependence upon hay is well exemplified for all Ireland in the fluctuation of the annual milk yield. It is at its highest through May, June, and July during the period of fresh grasses, and sinks to a low in January. The range is from 3 per cent of annual production in January to 13 per cent in June.

The large farmer, typically the so-called "rancher," a grazier of over 200 acres, presents a quite different picture, though he, too, is a great cattle producer. Ordinarily, he cultivates nothing but a "kitchen garden" for household use. He utilizes his land to its full capacity for grazing cattle. Ranching of this sort is typical of the midland counties such as Meath and the other counties of Leinster, but it is found also in certain areas of Clare. The first of these is the low-lying alluvial plain around the mouth of the river Fergus, very rich in grass-bearing soil. A concentration of large holdings is found there. The actual acreage of the holdings gives little information because of the difficulty of comparing

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

ports were live animals and live animal products, such as butter.

Of these exports, of course, cattle were the most valuable item and represented the great export staple. They were likewise the crop to which most other produce could be devoted when not used as human food. That this kind of conversion of other stuffs into cattle could take place is to be seen in the figures for milk. Though the Free State produced in the year in question a total of 589,000,000 gallons of milk, including both whole milk and butter, comparing favorably with such an output as Switzerland's yearly 528,000,000 in 1923, only 43 per cent of it was exported, while in Switzerland the export was 67 per cent of the Swiss total.

The figures for exports introduce a new factor of difference between the holdings of large and small size and their populations. Small holdings do not share equally with large holdings either in the consumption of agricultural produce or in its export. In both consumption and export commerce in the Free State, small holders and large holders play distinct roles.

Taking the first of these considerations, the figures for consumption reveal the difference. The estimated human consumption of whole milk (as milk) was some 90,000,000 gallons, according to the statistical record of the year 1928,[17] of which 70,000,000 gallons were consumed by agriculturalists and 20,000,000 by the remainder of the population. It was estimated that on the farms 38 gallons were consumed yearly per person. But that is the figure for all farms. There is a considerable difference here between types of farms.

Thus, in this case, on farms less than 50 acres only 36 gallons per person per annum were consumed, it was estimated, while on farms of over 50 acres, the consumption was 42 gallons. In Munster, the chief milk-producing province,

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

512 462 356 children. If they are of school age, she must dress them, feed them, and get them off to school. She does all the cooking and washing up after meals and keeps the teapot always ready. Each morning she sweeps the house, makes the beds, and so on. The clothes of the household are her care as well, and the indispensable and constant mending of them which rough wear makes necessary all falls to her lot.

This household work is familiar to us; the point of itemizing it is merely to make clear the confined sphere in which the woman's recurrent and indispensable duties fall.

512 462 356 231 234 But her work stretches beyond the house door. In the morning after breakfast she takes the milk buckets and milks the cows in the sheds in the haggard. This is merely one of the many trips she makes in and out of the kitchen doors for fuel, for water, to feed and tend the animals and the fowl. Her milking finished, she must bring the milk in and separate it. In recent years, more prosperous farms have been able to make use of the separator. If there is none, she must set the milk in large pans and allow the cream to rise. The whole process of the conversion of milk to butter is her charge.

512 462 231 After the morning milking and the feeding of her human charges, she must turn her attention to the feeding of the farm animals, especially the young ones. The cows and horses are not her province, but all the care of the calves, pigs, and fowl falls to her lot. She prepares a mixture of warm milk and grain for the calves, feeding them from a bucket. They must not be allowed to suck, as the milk is meant for human consumption. Then she boils a large kettle of potatoes over the fire for the chickens and the pigs, or takes them the leavings of the previous day.

512 462 [251] Before noon she hangs another kettle over the fire filled with potatoes for the use of the family. In season she adds white cabbage and nearly always includes a portion or two of bacon, some of it home cured in brine to resemble salt PORK.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

The methods of transport in the countryside are related
489 to the distances to be traveled and the errands to be run. These things are matters of the organization and relationships of family and community. It is not only the means of transport which can be related to the constituent relationships of country social life. Each kind of farm product exported and farm need purchased involves a different distance of travel, a holder of a different status in family and community, and a different relation with the outsider.

489 The goods the farmer produces travel to the centers at
443 which they are exchanged over distances which are com-
438 mensurate with their value, their importance in farm economy, and their association with the status of the persons in the rural communities under whose charge they are produced. Horses take most care, are most valuable, and are the very special charge of the man of the house. The horse fair accordingly draws from the largest area. Cattle are the great money crop, the export staple. Accordingly the cattle fairs are among the chief lodestones of the larger centers, drawing from the deepest hinterlands of the major market areas. They are masculine affairs. Likewise potatoes and corn crops, oats, come to market only in the major centers. Farm fathers bring them down by horse and car from the deepest hinterlands.

Pigs represent a much shorter period of work and care. They are often in woman's province. The pig fairs are smaller gatherings, held in small centers, drawing from small hinterlands. Lesser vegetables, principally cabbage, travel no such distance as potatoes, and women often sell them. Finally, butter and eggs travel the shortest distance of all. They are often bartered at the crossroad centers. Before creameries were introduced, salted firkins or tubs of butter, representing a longer accumulation, went longer distances to the village centers.

234 Creamery associations were not established until the
438 middle of the time of research in County Clare. They are

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

part of a new economics which brings distributing agencies to the farmer's door. Consequently they do not fit this picture and are among the great forces of gradual change. They have made dairying the pursuit of the farm father, as it was not before. Like motor lorries, they represent the new geographic order that is gradually overcoming the old.

The goods that reach the farmer cover distances between their ultimate distributing center and consumer in the farm families in the same proportion as they are bound in with the statuses and relationships in work and life of the familistically organized groups. The men go to the larger towns with or without their wives for the larger annual purchases of boots and cloth goods or furniture or tools and implements. The boys may go for the more ordinary purchases of flour and foodstuffs and feeds and so on, to be bought in their fathers' names, to the local centers and villages. The household needs from day to day are the women's province. Tallow, candles, oil, sugar, tea, are to be had either in the villages or in the crossroad centers. The only need the men may fill so close to home is the recurrent hunger for tobacco and drink.

If we turn this view of travel and distribution and personal relationship into generality, we see that the pattern is such that it fits those of community life we have described. In the masculine sphere of life the disposal of produce means masculine travel and masculine building of relationship with the outside world of greatest geographical range. Taking each item of masculine produce in the descending order of its importance to the farm families, the area out of which the product is brought to a center is progressively smaller. The same fact is true of the feminine produce, with the difference, of course, that the range is smaller to begin with. The area of widest contacts established by women and the areas drawn upon by women and the areas

5: Ó Danachair 1-5 (no date) 1956 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Irish Farmyard Types

CAOIMHIN Ó DANACHAIR

DUBLIN

121 The fundamental need of shelter from the elements and protection during the hours of darkness is doubled for the farmer, who must provide shelter and protection for his livestock, his gear and his harvested crops as well as for himself and his family; the type of shelter which he provides is influenced not only by his traditional methods of using building materials but also by the type of husbandry in which he engages, the local conditions of soil and climate, and his own social and economic position in the community.

132 The climate of Ireland is mild and moist. The average January temperatures range from 40° to
251 44° F. over the whole country, while those of July range from 57° to 60°, and the average annual
231 rainfall over five-sixths of the country is from 30 to 50 inches, with from 175 to 250 days on which some rain falls. Heavy snow, great cold or long continued frosts are very exceptional, as are long droughts or great heat. In such a mild climate hay and unthreshed corn may be stored outdoors in ricks or stacks, and this was the usual method of storage in Ireland until quite recently; it still is the usual method on many farms. Other crops, such as potatoes and roots, and even grain and apples were, in many parts of Ireland, stored outdoors in suitable pits or containers; this, too, is still often done in the case of potatoes. Consequently storage space for the harvested crops was not the most urgent of the farmer's building needs. Again, the mildness of the climate permits the keeping in the open throughout the year of certain kinds of livestock, such as sheep and dry cattle, while on the other hand milking cows must be kept indoors during the winter and early spring. Thus it may be said that, in general, the size and form of an Irish farmyard depends upon the number of milking cows kept by the farmer.

234 Although, in Ireland, the raising of crops, especially of grain crops, was neither small in volume or unimportant in rural economy, it was in most times and places secondary to cattlebreeding, stock-raising and dairying. The evidence of archaeology and history reveals the importance of cattle from a very early date down to our own time; even yet, in many parts of the country a man's wealth is reckoned not by the size of his farm but by the number of his cattle, and the area of a farm is commonly reckoned by the number of cattle which it will support—"the grass of ten cows" is still a familiar term.

311 Farms are generally classified as small, medium or large, according to their area. A farm of less
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8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Luogh is remote. It is nearly half a day's tramp along the roads from its market town, Ennistymon. Even Ennistymon is no metropolis. It is a sprawling village of 1200 people. Neither bus nor train runs between the two.

But Luogh is not entirely isolated by this remoteness. It does not entirely escape modernity. Pleasure-bent motorists from the cities drive through along the cliffs. One can see Atlantic liners standing-to just outside Galway Bay. Many of Luogh's farms have a horse-drawn mowing machine, out of an English steel works, and some of the houses own a mechanical cream separator, even though next door a wooden hand churn is still in use which looks no different from those found deep in the bogs.

But modern tools do not make the life of Luogh. They ease it perhaps, and work a slow effect. But in a short stay one cannot see that change. One's attention turns to the life into which these few strays of modernity find their way.

For Luogh is like many another community of small farms over Clare and southern and western Ireland. Some lie closer to urban centres, some are even more remote. Many are better off; some few are poorer. Some have kept the Irish language better; others have abandoned it altogether for the brogue. But they all have the 'sweet *blas*' of Gaelic still on their tongues and speak an idiom embedded in their common folk life.

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lady Gregory: "They have cows, and sheep, and chickens out in the raths just the way we have them with us. For it is they that take them when the bad luck is on us and then whatever we do won't stop them." The 'other people', as they are also called, are not very different in this regard from ordinary mortals; they surround themselves with much the same materials of life.

So, then, when ill-luck descends upon him, the countryman knows something at least of its nature, enough to allow him to cope with it. Take the example of butter. Butter is an important staple of farm diet; it is of great interest to all the family group. Yet the making of butter, especially with a hand-churn, is a notoriously tricky process. Should it fail to come in the churning, the matter is one of grave concern. One woman of North Clare put the matter very clearly when she said: "And queer things do happen to butter, and it's a fact it often wouldn't come and you don't know why. You'd be trying every way you could and still you'd be without it but for what your friends would give you."

But in that event, the countryman is not left helpless. His belief provides him with a sure knowledge of what the trouble is, and of what may be done about it. The fairies have 'taken' the butter and must be induced to bring it back. Many of the tales he has heard year after year attest to this taking. For instance, here is the synopsis of a story

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

234 776 789 told by a Clare farmer of friends of his, whose house he named:

"Two men return from a fair to the house of one 234 of them to have breakfast. There the woman was 776 churning, but no butter would come. The first of 789 the men suggested maybe they [the men] were 539 holding it up, and they left the house, but with no result, for when they returned there was still no butter. Upon finding out that an old woman, a stranger, had borrowed a bit of milk the day before, the first man closed the doors, took a ploughshare and held it in the turf fire. Soon there came a knock at the door, and after the third knock the woman of the house went to it. Then an old woman's hand passed a jug of milk through the crack of the door and a voice said: 'put this back in the churn'. She did so, and immediately all the milk turned to good butter."

But the farmer knows, too, that the fairies do not 776 always work alone. There is often a human agency 754 involved along with theirs. Here one enters the really dangerous 'pisherogues', the practices of wicked magic. A human being may perform a rite or omit a precaution in such a way as to bring about a visitation of ill-luck and disaster. He may transfer disease and sickness from his own farm to the next, he may steal the butter of another's churn, he may destroy, steal, maim and kill by inducing the supernatural powers to commit the havoc.

776 789 But sometimes the human being who brings

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century ago, "the migration usually took place upon a fixed day, the junior members of the family generally perform the journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in "booley" or "boley" assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr. Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the inhabitants of a particular "town" presumably living together. Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the herders consisted largely of "whitemeats" that is milk products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This "bog-butter" frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations: it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese. A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.

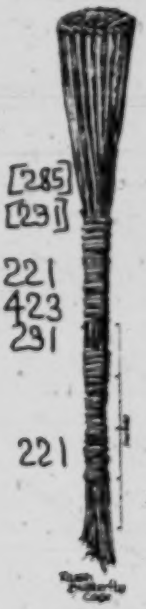

Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER IX.

FARM BUILDINGS.

First in importance in this pastoral country comes the cow byre, which is often an old dwelling house converted or an extension built on to the end of the kitchen. We have seen that in the west it is not long since the cows were housed in the bottom end of the kitchen, and even now one gets the impression from the proximity of the byre and its smells that there is a reluctance to be separated by any distance from the beasts which play such a large part in the life and traditions of the countryside. Along one side of the byre, above the feeding place, runs the rannel- or revel-tree to which the vertical cow-stakes are secured at intervals: "thin as a ravel-tree" is an expression sometimes heard. Alternatively, in the west, the stakes are held in place by iron staples or perforated stone slabs let into the wall. Iron chains have almost entirely replaced the rush "binnen ropes" (Chapter 14) which were fastened to a plaited ring of sally, hazel or rowan—called a "woody"—sliding up and down the stake. In Co. Clare the animals were secured by a straw rope tied round the horns, and no doubt different methods could be described from various districts. Milking times also vary from place to place, and there is no topic about which so much lore might be collected as about cows and their products. It is commonly said that there is a right and a wrong side on which to milk a cow. In Ireland, so far as my observation goes, it is the right-hand side.

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[p. 79]

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234 Behind the cows there runs a slab-lined drain or groop, which carries the refuse through the "groop hole" in the wall to the midden. Hanging from the rannel-tree you may perchance see a charm in the shape of a perforated flint [176] pebble, while over the door, decaying Brigid's Crosses dating [751] back for several successive years show that the cattle are under the special protection of the Irish saint. In the byre gable it is not uncommon to see a dove-cote, at any rate along [235] the east coast where English influence has been strong since Norman times. Pigeons are fond of heat and thrive near farm animals. In Lecale, Co. Down, I have seen nests made of straw rope hung above the horses in the stable.

343 The barn is not infrequently built above the byre. When
251 the dwelling house alongside remains, in the Irish tradition, single-storied, the effect of the towering barn is rather incongruous. This arrangement makes it simple to feed the animals, provides a springy wooden floor for thrashing, and also gives a better draught for the purpose. Moreover, the raised position helps to make the corn secure from damp and rats. The barn has opposite doors and half doors to regulate the through draught and to keep out stray animals while work goes on inside. Access to the barn is obtained by external stone steps or a sloping ramp, under which the stone dog kennel is often built in. Some of the activities and appurtenances of the barn are described in Chapter 14.

343 Little need be said about the stable, since small farms have as a rule only one mare. In the old-time single-roomed kitchen-byres, the mare had her stall alongside the cows, and you will sometimes see the keeping-hole above the back door where the brush and curry comb were stored. The stable, like the byre, may be attached to the house or may be separate, but for convenience and economy it tends to be built as part of a range of buildings. In decayed rundale clusters now occupied by only one or two holders there were, ready to hand, many old dwelling houses which could be put to different uses as "offices."

Before we turn to the housing of other livestock, mention should be made of the turf-house, for which many different

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

CHAPTER XIV

WOOD, SKIN, STRAW AND RUSH WORK.

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322 Many old-fashioned tools will be found lying around an old farmstead, some of them still used and others discarded but hoarded as is the way of the countryman. With some of these, generally dismissed in farm auction bills as "other objects too numerous to mention," we shall deal briefly in this chapter. Upright butter churns of oak are to be found in every county: they are made by the cooper and their construction is a specialized craft. I illustrate (Fig. 67) some varieties of churn and staff ("dasher" or "lonny"). They differ in size because the churns are "made to measure" according to the number of milking cows kept. One of the drawings shows the dash churn in cross-section: it should be added that the joins between the staves of the bottom are sealed with rushes. Ancient churns discovered in the bogs are generally cut out of the solid. They have a narrow neck and are provided with lugs for transport. Old accounts tell us that the dairymaid used to plunge in her arm to make the butter, and thus the dasher may be regarded as an implement developed directly from the human arm and hand. The staff was often worked by an arrangement of levers known as "glaiks," but this is rarely seen nowadays.

The full equipment of stave-built vessels supplied by the cooper included, besides the churn, the buttermilk butt and the cream butt or "keeler," the butter tub, the milk "can," into which the fresh milk was poured, and the piggin. Many

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9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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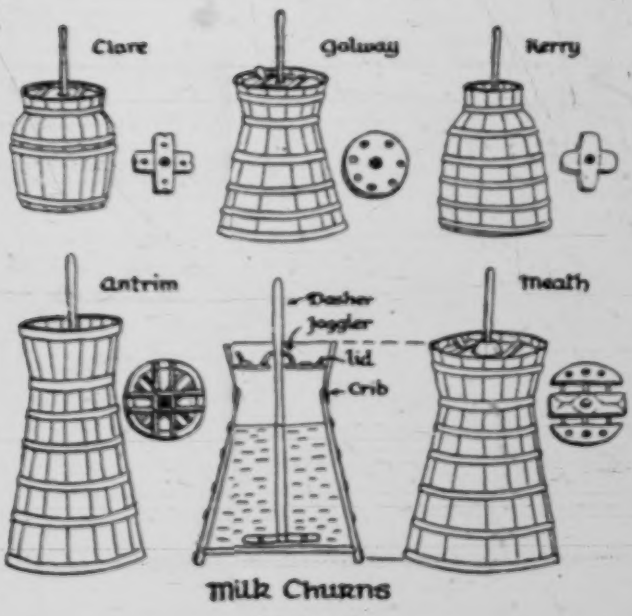

Fig. 67.

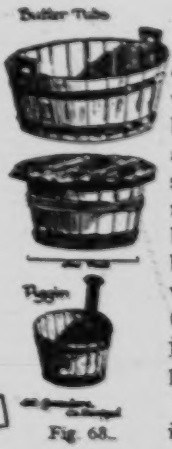

Fig. 68.

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of these are in regular use: I illustrate a piggin or milking vessel (Fig. 68), a butter tub, and an old-fashioned tub of bog-fir, bound, as were the other stave-vessels before the adoption of iron hoops, with split sally rods, and covered with a stone lid. Two smaller stave-built noggins for holding water, milk or porridge are also shown (Fig. 69), the Tyrone example being of oak with an ash wrapping, the Donegal specimen of bog-fir and sally bands. Passing mention must be made of wooden spoons and the handsomely carved butter stamps (Fig. 70). Wooden dishes, ladles (Fig. 70) skimmers and jogglers (Fig. 67) are made of sycamore and turned on the pole-lathe.

Sieves of various kinds found a use in the dairy as well as in kitchen and barn. Among the exports from Ireland in

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

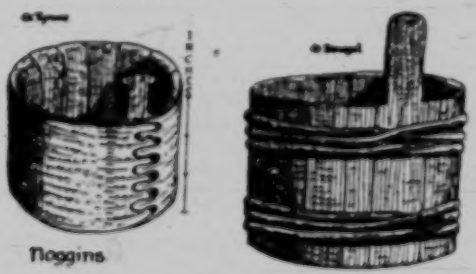

Fig. 69.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

Fig. 70.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Lough Neagh—incidentally one of the oldest occupied areas in the country—the valley of the Suir and the Aran Islands. I illustrate a boat-shaped yarn-holder (Fig. 73) and also two types of " calf basket " (Fig. 74), which are tied over the calf's muzzle to prevent it from taking the cow's milk. (In north Antrim, as in Wales, I have seen instead a leather strap armed with nails which is fastened on in such a way that the nails prick the cow's udder). The calf basket recalls the Roman *corbis constricta* which prevented the plough oxen from cropping the vine shoots. In fine work the basket maker uses split rods which he prepares with a " cleaver." The example illustrated (Fig. 75) is made of cow's horn.

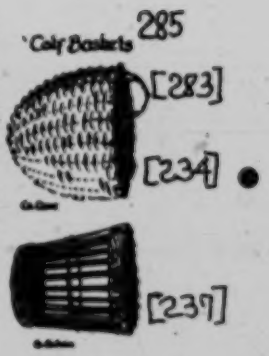

Fig. 74.

Fig. 75.

Then there are the shallow fish baskets, resembling the potato-dish shown in Fig. 31, which the Galway fisherwomen carry on their heads. In Limerick oval trays or " floats " are used for hawking shell-fish or fruit: they are of various sizes from 1 to 2 feet in length. Potato baskets (Fig. 54) and shallow baskets used in connection with wool-dyeing must be mentioned, and I illustrate two kinds of linebasket (Fig. 76) which, like the lobster pots (Fig. 104) are made by the fishermen. The tall apple-baskets used for picking fruit in the Armagh orchards taper down to a narrow base. On the other hand the deep carrying-baskets of the Aran Islands are shaped

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[482]
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11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure. In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

372 The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive, except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

381 A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there is no royalty paid.

226 Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much [251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this [342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time. [435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen, and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

439 Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
235 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina, whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the [234] summer and autumn.

273 Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district, though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until the job is finished.

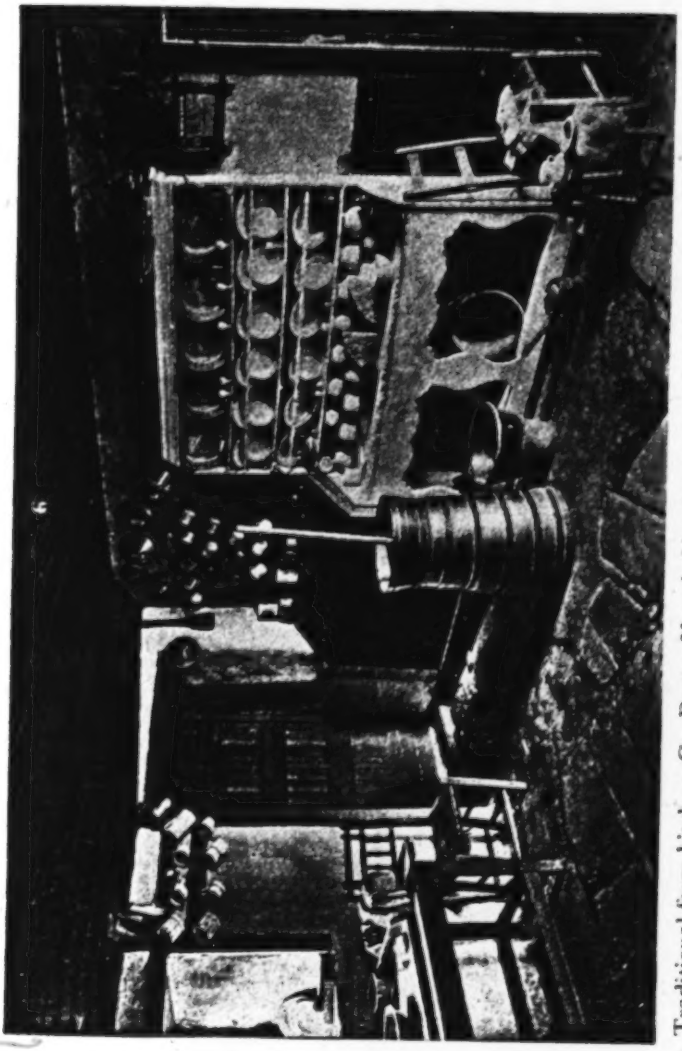
286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

231 the calves born each year are normally
439 kept until they are two years old, when they are sold either to dealers on the island or to visiting dealers from the mainland. No cattle are slaughtered for meat on the island at present as it pays better to send them on to the fairs at Clifden. The dealers wait for a favorable opportunity of selling the stock and the farmers agreed that these arrangements were far better than individual visits to the fair by the difficult route described on p. 203. The policy
654 of grading up stock, favored by the
232 Congested Districts Board,[12] has been highly successful; there are accredited bulls of the Hereford and Aberdeen Angus breeds available on the island.
234 No butter is sold and little is ever
437 bought. As one of the islanders put it, "You wouldn't understand our ways, sir. If we have a bit of butter over, there's sure to be someone who can do with it, so we just let them have it."
236 Sheep are kept in large numbers and pastured on the common lands; there are probably at least 1000 sheep owned by the farmers on this island. The sheep are sold to the butcher for the island's only meat supply, or to dealers for eventual sale on the mainland, and the wool clip is sold to a Dublin firm which sends a representative to the island in September. No pigs are kept,
231 nor any goats, and each farmer has only
[235] a few fowls since there is no way of selling eggs or chickens; only a small number of people have geese, ducks, or turkeys. During the 1914–1918 war, eggs were sold at 3d. each for export, but transport difficulties and the failure to develop any marketing scheme have long since extinguished the trade. The lack of pigs, which may seem surprising,

[113] [12] W. L. Micks: An account of the constitution, administration and dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923, Dublin, 1925, pp. 27–33.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Down

PLATE 1



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Traditional farm kitchen, Co. Down. Note baking-board on table (*left*) and meal ark to left of dresser, with beetle hanging above.

[Facing p. 32]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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County Antrim

PLATE 2

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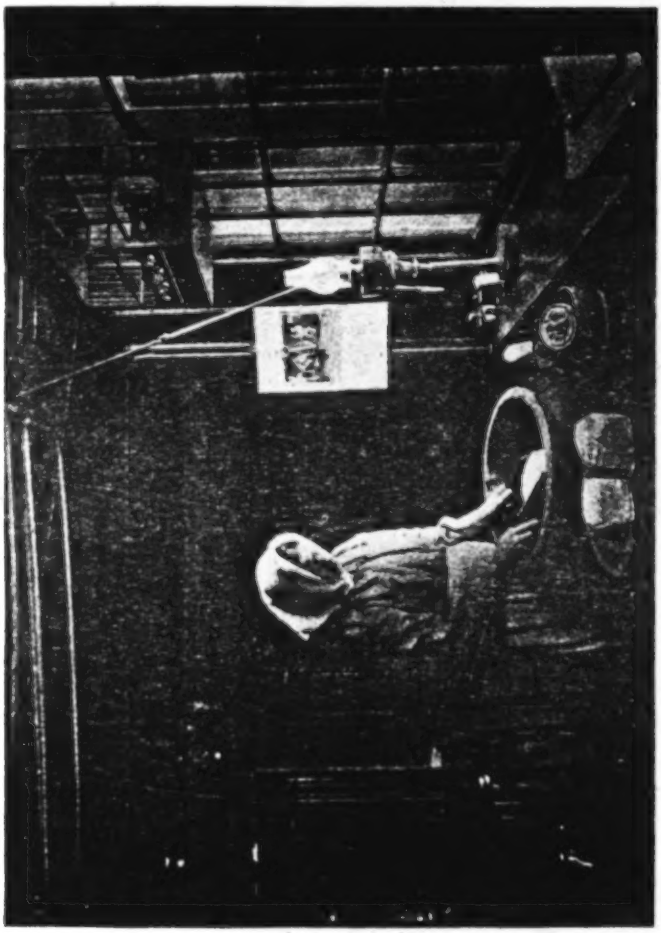

Butter-making in a Co. Antrim farm kitchen.

[FACING p. 33]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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tons weight of dung, and only cleaned out once a year!'[1] Sea wrack and shell sand were carted up to thirty miles inland from the coast.[2] In the absence of permanent fences the majority of the cattle must be moved away during the summer and those remaining carefully herded or tethered on the outfield, or put in temporary enclosures to manure that part of the outfield which was due for cultivation.[3] In its origins and full development the rundale system depended on the movement of most of the livestock to summer booleys situated some distance away. Here the widely distributed uplands and boglands played their part in the traditional economy. Although late survivals of the booleying system are hard to find, little of it managing to outlive the crisis of the Great Famine, we are beginning to track down its history and significance. The Irish texts are as disappointing and vague as they are in many matters touching the common people, but folk-memory comes to our aid. There are stories, and place-name evidence, from most parts of the country, and regional variants of the practice are being studied and mapped.[4]

We give first some quotations from the few discerning observers who drew attention to the practice. Edmund Spenser's enlightened spirit of inquiry is shown in his remark: 'Have you ever heard what was the occasion and first beginning of this custom? for it is good to know the same.' He writes, in 1595, 'There is one use amongst them, to keep their cattle and to live themselves the most part of the year in boolies, pasturing upon the mountain and waste wild places.'[5] His objections to the system, however, reveal his Englishry: the booleys hid outlaws and loose people, and the wandering life made the Irish barbarous. The following brief reference comes from O'Flaherty's famous account of West Connacht: 'In summertime they drive their cattle to the mountains, where such as look to the cattle live in small cabins for that season.'[6] In the eighteenth

[1]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 17.
[2]E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country* (1951), 141.
[3]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 131.
[4]J. M. Graham, 'Transhumance in Ireland', in *The Advancement of Science*, 37 (1958), 74–9.
[5]Quoted in H. Morley, *Ireland Under Elizabeth and James I* (1890), 67.
[6]R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from

[1]W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.
[2]Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.
[3]An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however, are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with their support from November to May.' In theory the total number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep, eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rectangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings. In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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the staple was butter and oatcake rather than oatcake and butter. When bread was made from gritty quern-ground flour the butter would have served as a lubricant to assist the swallowing process. 'They swallow lumps of butter mixed with oatmeal', wrote Fynes Moryson about the year 1600, 'and love no meat more than sour milk curdled.'[1] When food was left out for the fairies it was generally oatmeal and butter: needless to say, particularly when accompanied by whiskey, it disappeared during the night. In the very high present-day Irish consumption of milk products we notice once more the survival of ancient custom, for milk products were the staple food of medieval times in all parts of the British Isles.[2] The Irish laws distinguish between summer and winter food, and the consumption of meat was almost confined to the winter months. Pork was the most highly esteemed meat, but no doubt deer and other products of the chase augmented the fare for the upper classes. Surplus cattle were presumably killed off at Martinmas and salted as 'marts', but among the peasantry the emphasis was on milch cows, and cow's meat was fit only for stews. Butter—and whiskey also—was preserved in bogs to be available in the lean days of spring (Chapter XIV). On the other hand there is little evidence of cheese-making apart from soft cheese, including that made from sheep's milk, and the Irish consumption of cheese is today probably the lowest in Europe. The making of hard cheese is a comparatively late development everywhere, so that Ireland may be said once more to have remained faithful to ancient practice. With a *per capita* consumption of 2·7 lb. in 1954, the Irish republic comes last in the fifteen countries for which figures are given in the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Circular quoted above; the highest is Norway with 19 lb. per head. I may add that I have found no record or tradition of the milking of sows which occurs in parts of Spain and which, it is suggested, may have been a Celtic custom.[3] It is said in Ireland that if a man drinks sow's milk he can see the wind for ever after.

[1]Fynes Moryson, *The Manners and Customs of Ireland*, 321.
[2]J. C. Drummond and A. Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food* (1939), 51.
[3]R. U. Sayce, 'Milking and Dairying', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 51 (1951–52), 120–54.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Low stools and benches seem to have been the traditional form of seating, and no doubt the floor served for the children. Travellers noted that this was the best way to avoid the smoke: 352

> By sitting low, on rushes spread,
> The smoke still hover'd overhead;
> And did more good than real harm,
> Because it kept the long house warm.[1]

Fireside seats, more or less fixed, were often of stone, a solid block of wood or a large lump of turf. In the 'round about' hearths which were common in parts of Co. Antrim, and which people who remember them have described to me, the seat behind the fire, a log of wood, was known as the dais, a dialect word for a bench or seat which appears to be of north English origin. Solid seats of coiled straw or rushes were also common (Fig. 29) but the favourite fireside stool was the three-legged creepie, resembling a milking stool and like it finding a firm hold no matter how uneven the floor. There is little evidence of chairs of any antiquity. A three-legged type found in parts of the west, with a triangular seat and a narrow one-piece back has probably evolved from the creepie but looks Germanic. The nearest approach to a distinctive Irish style is the straw or rush-seated chair, which finds its best-known homes in Co. Down and Co. Limerick. High-backed armchairs made entirely of coiled straw rope after the manner of a beehive used to be found in the west, and since they can be paralleled in many parts of western Europe from the Orkneys to Spain it is probable that their manufacture is a peasant craft of some antiquity (Fig. 29). Cradles, too, were made of straw as well as of wood and basketwork, and they were sometimes suspended from the roof. I have heard of a cradle being improvised by laying a horse-collar on the floor. The phrase 'rocked in a pot' applied to an illegitimate child is said to derive from the use of a large fireside cooking pot as cradle and hiding place: round-shouldered infants were therefore suspect. [854] [848]

Down to recent times it was the custom to keep most of the dairying equipment in the kitchen, and in the traditional peasant house the upright churn still occupies a place against the wall, 234 353

[1] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle* (1724), Canto 2. [Text continues on p 95]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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usually opposite the fire. The absence, in a country predominantly pastoral and consuming large quantities of milk products, of a building or room set aside as a dairy is at first sight strange. Milk cattle, however, were closely identified with the woman of the house, and as we have seen they commonly shared the kitchen with the family. Owing to the scarcity of winter feeding-stuffs, moreover, the supply of milk must have been, down to a couple of centuries ago, largely confined to the summer months and butter-making was therefore undertaken at the booley houses. It must have been difficult to store the considerable amounts of milk products required for winter food, especially when one remembers that most of the peasant houses were made of wattles, sods or mud, and there is some evidence, as we shall see in Chapter IX, that they were kept underground under the old Celtic economy, in even temperatures and safe from the depredations of animals.

However this may be, the kitchen is the traditional place for keeping the churn, and for churning. The stave-built upright plunge churn, prototype of the metal milk-churn which at first faithfully copied its shape, belongs to a family of wooden vessels which has been diffused across the Old World from Ireland to Tibet and now survives most abundantly towards the limits of its range (Fig. 30). Made by local coopers, Irish churns display a considerable variety in shape and size, the shapes differing regionally, the sizes depending on the number of cows kept on the farm, for they were 'made to measure'. The small barrel-shaped churn of the south-west, with a narrow vertical mouth, would appear to be the older style. The mouth, designed to hold a lid through a hole in which the churn staff passes, is usually a separate unit attached to the body by a join—the crib—skilfully contrived and concealed under one of the encircling hoops. Some old churns have hoops of split rods, hazel or sally, but it was reckoned lucky to have one of the hoops of rowan. The staves are invariably of oak: the circular base is made in three pieces, dowelled together and having the joins sealed with rushes. Small churns which have been dug out of the bogs are generally found to have been cut from the solid, and they often have projecting lugs perforated for ease of transport. Those with holed lids were certainly churns, but others

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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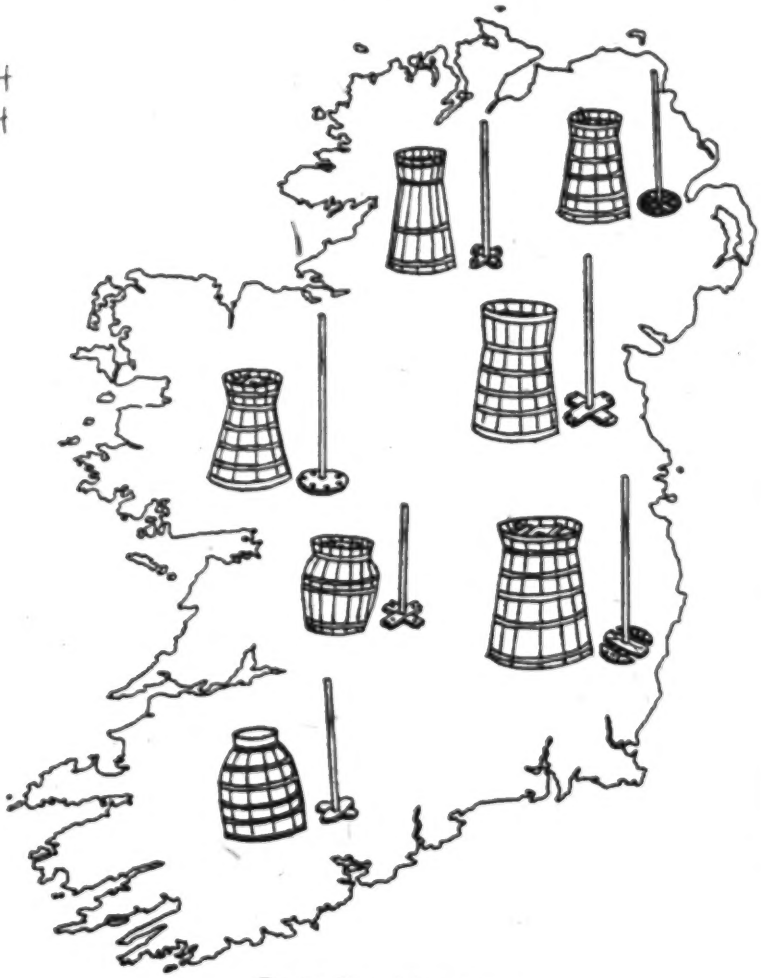

FIG. 30. Map of churn types.

were probably kegs for carrying milk: they have a rim of hoops which would allow a cloth or skin cover to be securely tied on.

234 A most interesting stave-built churn dating from the ninth century was discovered by Gerhard Bersu during the excavation

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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of a rath (farmstead) at Lissue, Co. Antrim, in 1946.[1] Its barrel-shaped body has the unusual refinement of an oval mouth, designed for pouring, with an iron rim-mount over which a cloth could be tied. A central iron band has two rings attached, evidently for suspension. A century ago, that is a thousand years after the Lissue churn was in use, we know that butter was made not far away on the shores of Lough Neagh by swinging the churn to and fro, suspended from the roof timbers. The Lissue churn could also have been used to carry milk from the summer pastures to the homestead. There are stories in the Mourne Mountains of milk transported in this way which would turn to butter by the automatic churning of the rough journey home from the hills. Evidently the lidless churn is the older type, and I have seen large specimens in Donegal. It was presumably from a churn of this kind, slung from a pony's back, that the Donegal child was observed 'peeping and screeching' as the pastoral cavalcade moved up to the summer booleys in the days before the Great Famine.[2]

The simplest form of churn dash, found along the west coast, terminates in a wooden cross. A similar Norwegian dasher has the ends of the cross joined with a sally ring, and a rope of cowhair is said to have been used for the purpose in Scotland. It was considered lucky to have the cross-pieces made of two different woods; indeed everything about the churn had to be made 'right'. In the whole business of handling milk luck was more important than labour, and butter-making in particular was a task fraught with unseen dangers. Often the butter would mysteriously refuse to break, and many were the precautions taken and the remedies sought. It seems that the old Irish method was to churn from the whole milk, and it was customary until recently to pour the skim milk into the churn along with the risen cream. It should be remembered, too, that the butterfat content was low, and that since many peasant farmers had no more than one cow at a time in milk, its quality would be more variable than the milk of a large herd. The unaccountable variations in the success of churning were widely attributed to the intervention of witches or fairies.

[1] G. Bersu, *U.J.A.*, X (1947), 30–58.
[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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234 407 Bad luck could not always be avoided, but at least it was desirable to make the toil less wearisome, and to this end a number of ingenious fittings were applied to the churn staff. Most of the examples I have seen, in the north-east, depend on the recoil of a strong spring to lift the staff, and they may well have been evolved from a spring pole, such as is used for the pole lathe, attached to the roof timbers.[1] Other devices enabled the staff to be moved in both directions by an arrangement of levers hinged to a couple-baulk. These engines, which have almost entirely gone out of use, were known as glaiks (Fig. 31).

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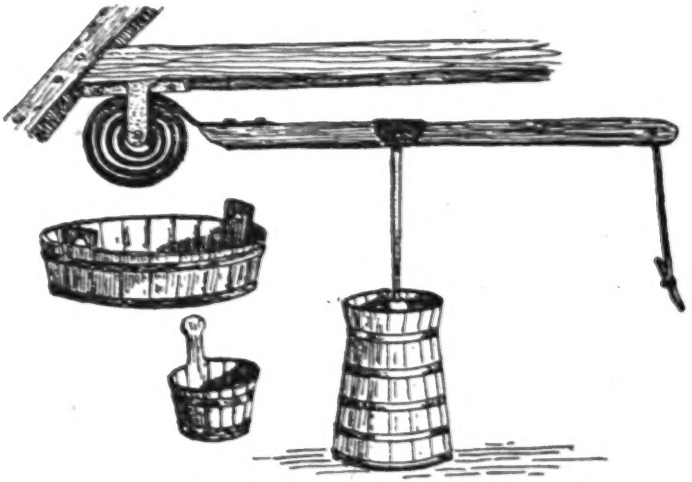

FIG. 31. Glaiks for churning, Co. Down, with milk 'keeler' and piggin, Co. Donegal.

353 788 Here we may mention other things which were hung from the roof timbers: in the more prosperous homes sides of bacon and portions of the autumn-killed ox, the mart; in poorer houses the salted ling or other 'kitchen'. And there was a strange custom of keeping in the roof, to bring luck to the livestock, part of a carcase, such as an animal's leg. This undoubtedly had its origin in the days when living-room and byre were under

[1]For another device, fitted to the churn, see my *Mourne Country*, Fig. 84.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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one roof. A relic of this practice may perhaps be seen in the sheep's bones that one occasionally finds tucked away in the keeping-holes of old-fashioned houses. Above the door the Bridget's Cross gives protection from fire and other dangers. 353 788

Besides the churn the old-time farm will have a wide range of other wooden dairying utensils, some stave-built, others carved or turned from the solid. They will include milking-piggins (Fig. 31), cream-skimmers, ladles, butter-scoops, and -prints, butter tubs and buttermilk butts. A shallow stave-built 'keeler' or a large turned bowl is kept for setting milk (Fig. 31). The solid and often shapely carved cups and methers (literally mead bowls) are already archaeological specimens (Fig. 65), and many of the other wooden containers are going the same way, including the little stave noggins described in an earlier chapter. 415 234

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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make the butter rancid, since the Irish, he says, preferred strong butter.[1] An eighteenth century writer states that some of the buried butter was

> So strong, a dog with help of wind,
> By scenting out, with ease might find.[2]

Others have claimed that it was buried to mature and purify it, and one writer has seen an explanation in the need to have butter available at Lent. It is reasonable to suppose that the surplus butter of summer would be stored in this way once the preservative properties of peat were known, but the practice is certainly pre-Christian in origin. None of the Irish finds has been securely dated—the majority of the wooden containers have an ageless 'medieval' appearance—but a discovery in Skye was satisfactorily dated to the very beginning of the Christian era (it contained not only cowhairs but some strands from the head of a fair-haired dairymaid).[3] I am inclined to think that a practice which came to be generally adopted for utilitarian reasons had its origin in magic, and that deposits were originally made in the hope of appeasing the powers of evil and inducing an abundant flow of milk from the pastures.[4] The custom may well have originated during the crisis of the climatic deterioration in the last centuries of the pre-Christian era. Surviving folklore is full of the magic properties of butter, and in the west of Ireland it is known that lumps of butter were thrown into loughs and springs through which cattle were driven in order to restore them to health. It seems from the accounts of discoveries in the bogs that some of the butter containers had been thrown into a bog hole rather than buried. Later, no doubt, it became the practice to bury butter in order to preserve it, but if this had always been so I cannot think that there would have been so many unclaimed deposits left to await the slane of the turf-cutter. It should be noticed that the custom of preserving butter in bogs or in moist earth is found also in Scandinavia, Iceland, India and Morocco.[5] It is interesting that bog butter

[1] Sir W. Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 82.
[2] W(illiam) M(offatt), *The Western Isle*, Canto 2.
[3] J. Ritchie, *P.S.A.S.*, 75, 5–22.
[4] E. E. Evans, *U.J.A.*, 10, 59–65.
[5] ibid., 59.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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OLD PISHROGUES

Old customs die hard in isolated islands and in the loneliness of ships at sea. Fishermen in the north to this day avoid direct mention of many words such as pig, priest and rat, and similar tabus are found among fishing communities as far away as Malaya, 'Formerly when starting on fishing expeditions the crews of Irish boats were very careful that their craft should leave the shore in a direction sunways, and even yet this superstition directs the course of many a fishing boat',[1] and, we may add, controls the casting of a net. A boat should always be entered on the right-hand side. In the kingdom of Mourne 'it was unlucky to be the third boat out on leaving harbour, and men would go to any lengths to avoid it, even tying two boats together so that there should be no third boat. On a Monday morning a fisherman will laughingly refuse to give you a light for your pipe, for he would be giving away his luck for the week. There were lucky and unlucky people to whom to sell fish, and it was the custom not to sell all the catch but to leave some fish in the boat. When a present of fish was made they were lifted backwards high over the head from the boat and not given straightforwardly. Nor would the old fishermen clean their boats until the end of the season, or even wipe the fish-scales from their boots. An unlucky boat would try to steal the luck of another boat by rubbing alongside it.'[2] The long-line fishermen of Carrickfergus would always spit on the first and last hook they baited, and in the mouth of the first fresh fish taken off the hook.[3] Superstitions attach also to fresh-water fish, especially to the sacred trout which, for the most part invisible, bring luck to pilgrims who catch a glimpse of them in certain holy wells.

Innumerable pishrogues concern the domesticated animals, and in particular cows and their milk and butter, which are peculiarly liable to supernatural influences. In the face of these unseen forces it is important that a new season or a new venture, or any operation carried out for the first time, should be begun with care and due ceremony, for special danger is attached to these occasions. Thus the first rich milk given by a

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 52.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 196.
[3] S. McSkimin, *The History and Antiquities of Carrickfergus*, 260.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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newly-calved cow should be milked on to a piece of metal placed in the pail. Offerings of the 'beastlings' were poured in the raths and at the roots of fairy thorns, to appease the fairies. When taking a drink out of doors, the old countryman will casually spill a portion of the draught on the earth as a complimentary libation to the good people. 'When a cow fell sick through fairy malice, it was formerly by no means an uncommon practice, in the west of Ireland, to devote the ailing animal to St. Martin. The ceremony was performed by letting a few drops of blood from the cow in honour of the saint.'[1] Cows which, for no apparent reason, are not thriving are said to be elf-shot. The elf-stones or fairy-darts which are supposed to have caused the mischief are prehistoric flint arrowheads such as can be picked up in the fields. One of the tricks of the cow-doctor who is called in, and who keeps a few arrowheads handy, is to produce one by sleight of hand from the flank of the ailing beast. Or counter-magic can be worked by means of a flint arrowhead which must not be allowed to touch the ground after it has been found. The cow-doctor uses sympathetic magic in curing calves believed to be suffering from intestinal knots by drawing apart over the animal's back the loose ends of a string tied in a complicated witch-knot or 'bat', of the type which comes undone when pulled. But as always he must work the magic correctly, for if the knot is not resolved another one is tied inside the calf.

Hanging in the byre one sometimes sees a flint pebble suspended on a string through a natural hole. It is a witch-stone, protecting the cows from milk-stealers, and it may owe its virtue to the flint or to its symbolic ever-watching eye. In the Ardenne a holed flint hung in the stable is believed to preserve the horses from nightmares,[2] and nearer home in the Yorkshire dales holed stones known as ring-stones protected the cows from the evil eye. 'Blessings on all that I can see' is the traditional formula to use when one enters a byre. An ill-disposed person could, merely by looking at it, 'blink' a cow so that its milk would yield no butter. The cow could be cured by burning under its nose a portion of the blinker's clothes

[1] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 6.
[2] H. H. Turney-High, *Ch'tau-Gérrad* 55(19), 232.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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and a handful of thatch taken from above the door of his house. Butter-making must have been a chancy and critical business when each family had only one or two cows, ill-fed for a large part of the year, and there were fairies, witches and blinkers to contend with. The protective charms and prognostications connected with churning are legion. If you should enter an old-style mountain kitchen when churning is in progress you may well be invited to lend a hand, or at least to 'leave your weight on the staff,' just to show that your intentions are not evil. There must be no bad words during churning, no quarrels, no singing or drinking: to drink anything is presumably to dilute the milk. If the milk splashes the churner is fated to marry a drunken mate. When the butter at last breaks a small ball of it is traditionally taken and smeared on the wall or tossed on top of the dresser to bring luck to the house, perhaps originally as an offering to the fairies. And when the churning is finished the staff should be twisted round three times and placed across the mouth of the churn. There are many other precautions that may be taken: a horseshoe—preferably 'a shoe of one heating'—tied to the churn or nailed to the bottom; a nail from a horseshoe or from a coffin driven into churn or staff; a ring of salt placed on the lid; a twig of rowan tied round the churn. Or the plough coulter should be heated in the fire, and the churnstaff tied with a straw rope to the fire-crane: if the staff is made of rowan-wood so much the better. If despite all precautions the butter does not come there are ways of catching the thief. For instance, a cake is baked and stuck with pins and a bunch of yarrow placed in the churn. The thief will come crying to the door in pain, and he must not be allowed in but turned away.

Special precautions should also be taken to make the house safe at night from unwanted visitations. Before the fire is raked and 'smoored' (buried in peat-ash) a spark should be dropped into the foot-water, the water in which feet have been washed and to which many superstitions are attached. The carded flax should be placed under a weight, the band taken off the spinning wheel and the quern dismantled. Many stories are told of the risks involved in letting the fairies have access to these things. Finally the besom should be placed against the door: the

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date) 1910-12
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627 suspected family coming to the well, and sprang out and bade the
233 newcomers keep away. The parties quarrelled, and were rein-
823 forced, as the news spread, by all the women, children, dogs, and sympathisers of both families. At last guns and hay-forks were brought, and blood was on the point of being shed, when some one found that midnight had passed, and the contestants at once went home. The cattle gave good milk all that year, and the well was watched on succeeding May Eves with equally good results. The bitterness is said to have died out round the well some years ago, but is still apparent between the households in other matters.[25]

234 A charm to cure "slow churning" has already been described.[26]
789 In 1892 a horrible case of stirring milk with a dried human hand
826 in order to "bring butter" was reported from the Kilkee district, but I could never learn the details. A similar practice somewhat earlier, near Oola on the borders of Limerick and Tipperary, was brought to light after the death of a farmer by a quarrel, ending at the sessions, between his three sons for the possession of the ghastly object.

234 The method of "taking butter" practised near Craigbrien, to
789 the south of Ennis, was to take a hair from the tail of each of the victim's cows on May morning, twist the hairs together, and dip them in the milk.[27] I heard of a protective knotting of seven hairs in each cow's tail near Edenvale in the same district, and of a magic dashing of water over the churn when the butter was slow to come,—an excellent natural aid in hot weather. The greasy substance called "May butter," lying on the grass with the dew, was used for milk charms near Clonlara. I heard of it more
[791] definitely at Kenry, County Limerick, where a woman gathered it in her apron, and a hare was seen rolling and rubbing itself in the "May butter"; the hare, when pursued, turned into a local witch. If you come into a house where churning is in progress, you should always "put your hand to the churn," *i.e.* give a few strokes

[25] So told to me by the late Hugh Massy Westropp, who, as nearest magistrate, had to intervene to keep the peace on more than one occasion, and was called up to the well on one May Eve.

[26] Vol. xxi., pp. 195-6, as told by the late Miss W. Westropp of Fortanne.

[27] So late Mrs. Stacpoole of Edenvale.

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14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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with the churn "dash," and if you are smoking you should finish the pipe in the house, or you may "take" the butter. There is still living to the south of Ennis a man who is afraid to touch a churn lest the butter should "go away," and he get the discredit of "butter-taking." (I may boast myself of the repute of having "the lucky hand" that "brings" the butter quickly.) Long ago the O'Briens of Kells near Corofin told the late Dr. G. U. MacNamara of the latter place how one "Donogho buidhe" (yellow Donal), a local "fairy man," being offended one day about getting a glass of whiskey, left the house angrily. After his exit no amount of churning would bring the butter. He was pursued and appeased, and took a bit of paper from under the churn, when the butter came at once. In a case in the Tulla district in which a farmer's butter was "taken," he consulted the priest, by whose direction he searched in the corner of his corn-field, and found a small sheaf with a hazel rod in it. After destroying this the butter "came" in great abundance.[29]

THOS. J. WESTROPP.

[29] Cf. *ante*, p. 58.

(To be continued.)

[P. 244]

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

kelp-making has disappeared, pig rearing has been abandoned, and fishing has become mainly a subsistence pursuit engaged in by only a small number of islanders. Hand in glove with these developments came the enlargement of arable lands and hence an increase in good pasturage, first necessitated by the intrusion of the eelworm and then stimulated by government agricultural supports. Farming became a more time consuming and lucrative occupation, as did the breeding and fattening of cattle and sheep for export, and the keeping of horses and asses expanded to accommodate the increased emphasis on farming. Thus, while the subsistence economy changed but slightly in two generations, the money economy experienced a radical alteration.

At the present time, 59 householders own one or more cattle; 56, one or more sheep; 22, one or more horses; and 58, one or more asses, among whom 8 have 2 asses and 1 a jennet. The government regulates the breeding of both cattle and horses, with the result that only one man is licensed to own a bull and the horses are mares or geldings. Cows are serviced for a 1 pound stud fee in the most inaccessible of fields, where children and tourists cannot observe the breeding of the "beasts." Most of the asses, just as the bulls and stallions, are castrated, but in this case to prevent them from kicking down fences and braying excessively when sexually aroused. Whereas almost all of the horses and asses and a few cattle have been imported from the mainland, the sheep population is Inis Beag sired. For the most part, cattle are grazed on fallowing plots, the few goats on crags at the back of the island, and other livestock on indigenous pasturage.

Cattle owners usually possess a "milch cow," a yearling, and a calf, and cows and bullocks are sold at two years of age. When a milch cow becomes old and "dried up," it either is fattened and sold or, if the price on the mainland is low, butchered and eaten by the householder and his family, usually between Allhallows and Christmas. "Cattle jobbers" visit the island to purchase cows and bullocks, and in 1960 they were paying between 60 and 80 pounds per beast. Excitement prevails on the strand on days when cattle are shipped off. Each struggling animal is pushed out into the sea by a group of men and then pulled to a canoe by a rope attached around its neck; its head is held over the stern transom of the *curach* for the trip to the steamer, where it is hoisted from the water and swung high over the deck and into a hold. Sometimes an islander is forced by circumstances to import a calf, and in 1960 the purchase price of calves at the fair in a nearby port was approximately 20 pounds; a colt cost about 50 pounds and an ass 5.

Probably the most striking difference between cattle rearing on the mainland and in Inis Beag is that island cows are not stabled, but forage and are milked throughout the year in the fields. Between November and March, they are pastured south of the terrace crest on fallowing and the more luxuriant of the indigenous plots, fed hay and rye carried to them from barns and outbuildings, and watered by bucket from neighboring springs which are swollen from winter rains. Men and boys care for their needs during this period, and often spend as many as three hours walking out and back to the pastures twice each day. With the coming of spring, cows are moved to fields on the terraces where women and children can feed and milk them, or men, who are now entering on the busy agricultural and

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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[462] fishing season, will not use up so much time getting to and from the pastures. Other reasons for shifting cows are that the village wells are more dependable than the springs at the back of the island during occassional summer dry spells, and cows when "tormented" by insects can run about the terrace fields more safely than they can the rockier and more fissured indigenous and improved plots above.

[512] Milking is done between eight thirty and ten o'clock in the morning and four thirty and six in the afternoon during the winter, and an hour or two later in the summer. When milking, the farmer crouches at the right side of the beast and holds a pail with his left hand while drawing one teat at a time with his right. He murmurs to the cow in Irish to keep it pacified, and is ready to move swiftly should the animal suddenly shift its position.

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[233] To encourage cattle breeding, the government subsidizes the construction of reservoirs at the back of the island for collecting rain water, and of barns and outbuildings for storing hay, rye, potatoes, and farming and fishing equipment. The typical reservoir is placed in an area surrounded by actual or potential grazing land located at a considerable distance from the nearest spring. It is composed of a cemented stone platform with a slanting concave surface which drains into a

[343] rectangular shaped tank. Barns and outbuildings are small stone structures, usually thatched, which are single roomed and doored and may have one or two small windows. The barns, like the reservoirs, are placed within easy access of fields used for pasturage.

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236 Sheep are reared in Inis Beag to furnish wool, as well as to be sold and slaughtered for local consumption. They demand little care, as they are allowed to graze in undeveloped pastures and to obtain water from rain filled depressions in the pavement and from plants that they devour. Kept by their owners for five or six years and then disposed of, they are sheared once a year between May and July. There are white, brown, and black haired varieties, and between six and eight

[437] pounds of wool can be procured from an animal every shearing. If a householder possesses a large herd, he may choose to sell some of his lambs when they are six months old, and in August many lambs are shipped from Inis Beag on the steamer.

[262] Although some folk from time to time slaughter their own sheep to provide meat
[437] for the tables, several householders maintain large herds and specialize in selling lamb and mutton to visitors and fellow islanders.

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[232] All Inis Beag homes have at least one dog and most of them have a cat. These animals perform certain services and act as pets. At the time walls were
[224] low at the back of the island, dogs were employed to round up sheep, and they also aided their owners hunt rabbits along the rock piled shore of the west sound, when the meat of this animal was eaten more commonly than it is today. Now, their duties are restricted to warning of the approach of strangers and chasing chickens out of the kitchen. Cats are kept to catch mice, and their presence on the premises is sufficient to keep rats from approaching the house and outbuildings. They are treated less well than dogs, but both dogs and cats are given little affection and often are not fed enough. It is true that some islanders are strongly attached to their pets and provide them with adequate care, but they are the exceptions. A man devoted to his dog will be followed about the island by the animal, and a desired trait in a dog is that it will not show interest in persons outside of the

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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with him while fishing or be brought his dinner and afternoon lunch in the field. Infants and young children are fed milk at various times, and the youth often eat biscuits, candy, or bread spread with sugar between the five regular meals.

Most women bake their own bread in "pot ovens" suspended over the open fire, with ingredients purchased in the shops, but some buy bakery bread which is delivered from the mainland once a week. Women with many offspring must bake bread daily, since as many as five loaves will be eaten in a day by a family of eight. Cream is saved from the milk and turned into butter in locally made churns every few days, to provide the pound or more of butter consumed in a week by each member of the family. A few women purchase shop butter and also margarine for cooking, but the latter is not used on the table (despite the fact that it is one-third the price of imported butter), because it is an artificial product and thus thought to lack food value. Both chicken and duck eggs are eaten, and some persons prefer hard to soft boiled eggs. Men insist on drinking their tea from large mugs and prefer their bread sliced thick and spread generously with butter. Telling of a tea that he attended in Dublin, a man complained of teacups the size of egg cups and bread cut so thin that "you could see houses on the mainland through it." Children are more prone than adults to use jam on their bread, and a large jar of imported jam will last but a day in a household containing six children.

Few families can afford to serve meat daily, and sometimes several days will pass before meat appears on the table. Among the meats eaten are lamb, mutton, chicken, and fish procured locally, and rasher and sausage bought in the shops; however, some families have beef and lamb shipped directly to them from mainland shops weekly. Meats usually are boiled, even fish, and soup and gravy are made from the liquids formed. Although lobsters, crabs, snails, and other shelled sea creatures are obtained by the folk, they are exported, used for bait, or cast aside rather than eaten. Two kinds of seaweed are included in the diet and are considered delicacies: *creannach*, which can be consumed raw as it is pulled but more commonly is boiled and dried before being eaten, and *carraigín*, which when cooked with milk makes a tasty blancmange. These seaweeds are believed to promote health and are used as folk medicines by some islanders, who regard them as having a magical potency.

The potatoes grown in Inis Beag are considered outstanding in taste, even when compared with those grown on the mainland. They are boiled in a "cooking pot" over the open hearth; this container is deeper and has a rounder bottom than its pot oven counterpart. At one time, it was customary to drain potatoes and eat them from a round, flat, short-sided basket woven from sally rods, called a *ciseog*. They still are drained with the basket in many households, but I have observed only three families eating communally from a *ciseog* atop the table. This is thought to be a "backward" custom, and a film producer earned the wrath of the folk by portraying this trait in his work; actually, it did not appear in the film, nor did other sequences, such as a women suckling a pig in time of drought, which the islanders claim that the producer included to brand them "savages." Potatoes when eaten are "stabbed" with a fork, peeled with a knife, and eaten with the